Contributed

PATIENCE.

Esther Jackson Wirgman.

Do you but look how yonder baby boy,
With sudden anger flashing in his eyes,
Flings to the ground the long desired toy;
Its impotence discovered, spurned it lies.
So we, of larger growth, ofttimes as fretted,
Impatient throw our much sought baubles by
At their first use, the very wish regretted,
Though we go on for other moons to cry.

Yet the fact that we grow by the same losses
Is but as careful pruning of the knife,
For that most perfect fruit whose seeds are crosses,
The golden apple of the tree of life.
A strong, sweet patience. A fruit, once tasted here,
Flavors all this fretful world with Heaven's atmosphere.

Romney, W. Va.

THE PECULIAR MISSION OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

By Rev. D. D. Little.

What is the peculiar mission of the Southern Presbyterian Church? Of course we share with all other Christian bodies the obligation to carry the gospel of Christ to every nation. This obligation we have acknowledged before the world and have assumed responsibility for 25,000,000 people in seven different countries. But until every person in the world becomes a Christian, each separate church will always have a definite work at home as well as its share in the work abroad. Let us look over our territory and see if we can find out what our peculiar home field comprises.

The sphere of influence of the Southern Presbyterian Church may be considered as covering thirteen States—the eleven States of the "Confederacy," together with Kentucky and West Virginia (the majority of Presbyterians in the other border States belong to the Northern connection). The population of our field is approximately 24,000,000, of whom there are 16,000,000 white people and 8,000,000 negroes, that is to say, about two white persons to one negro. But when viewed from a missionary standpoint the ratio is very different. The great majority of the white people of the South belong to what we call the "better class," that is, they have enough intelligence and education to manage their own affairs without outside help. There are only three classes of wihte people in the South who need missionaries—the mountaineers, foreigners, and the laboring class—and not all of these.

There are approximately a million and a half foreigners in the South, but at least a third of these belong to the educated class. Of the four millions usually enumerated as "mountaineers," at least half live in the towns and wide valleys of the mountain region and are in no sense a missionary population. Of the laboring class it is only the unskilled and floating element that are in need of help, and in all the South there are not more than a million of these.

Giving most liberal estimates everywhere we believe that the following figures would cover all the white people of the South who need religious help from the outside:

Mountaineers, 2,000,000; foreigners, 1,900,000; laborers, 1,000,000; a total of not more than 4,000,000.

There are within our bounds 8,000,000 negroes. The most ardent admirer of the race would not say that more than one-fourth of them have reached the point where they are capable of self-government either in church or state. This leaves about 6,000,000 dependent on the help of the more intelligent people of the community.

Summing up what we have said, the intelligent white Christians of the South owe a religious responsibility to ten million people at home, four million of their own race and six million negroes, and if this responsibility were equally divided among all denominations we would each have about 50 per cent. more negroes to look after than white people of all classes put together.

But there are some things that would indicate that this responsibility is not equally divided; some churches seem to be better fitted for certain work than others.

Among the foreigners, one church seems to succeed about as well as another, but among the mountaineers and among the laboring classes in our cities and around public works, Methodists and Baptists are far more successful than Presbyterians. We have lost our hold on the country people at large.

This is not a pleasant confession to make, but it is a fact. Take for instance, the State of Alabama. There is not today one single self-sustaining country church in our entire Synod, and I know of only two self-supporting groups of country churches. The same condition prevails in Mississippi, Georgia, and nearly every other State of the far South. Even in North Carolina, our banner State, we are largely out-numbered. Within the past fifteen years the Baptists have organized about fifteen new churches in Tuscaloosa county, Alabama; the Presbyterians have organized one.

The mass of the people both in country and in town who do not belong to any church are of Methodist or Baptist families, and can be most easily reached by ministers of their own denomination. These are plain facts. The ratio of Presbyterians is not growing. Among the classes just mentioned, we are simply holding our own.

The peculiar mission of the Southern Methodist ana Baptist Churches seems to be to carry the gospel and Christian education to the mountaineers and to care for the spiritual interests of the laboring people in our towns and mining camps.

The Southern Presbyterian Church is made up almost altogether of ex-slave holders and their descendants. It is a well-known fact that negroes have more respect for and are more easily influenced and controlled by the old slave-owning class of the South than by anybody else in the world.

By heredity, environment and training our people as a whole are better fitted to give a well-rounded Christianity to the negro than any other denomination.

We would expect this theoretically, and the facts substantiate the theory. The Presbyterian Church has established and maintained for many years a number of successful mission Sunday-schools among the ne-